

Holy Family Steeple and Bell Removed in Wake of Wind Damage

BY PAULA MAXWELL

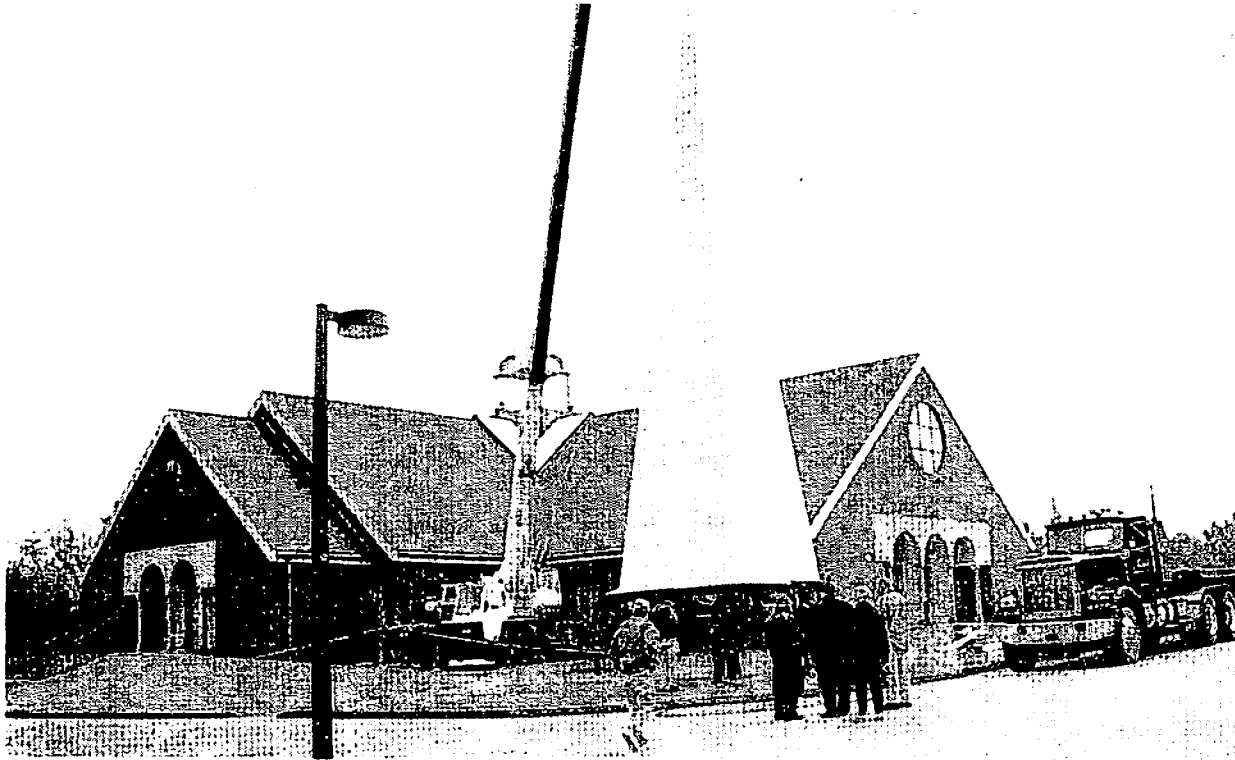
If not for the weight of a 2,800 pound bell, last Friday's hurricane force winds of 75 mph could have caused a real steeple chase at Holy Family Church.

"It probably would have blown over into the woods," said Holy Family Church architect Antonio deCastro, who designed the 8-year old church and on Monday anxiously supervised the removal of the 65-foot fiberglass steeple which swayed 3 to 5 feet during the height of the storm.

"We'll take the steeple down to find out what happened and follow up with the necessary repairs," said deCastro, who anticipates remounting the steeple and bell in March.

Both the platform holding the bell and the steeple were removed by crane in 2 separate pieces. Repairs will

To Page 14



Some anxious moments precipitated Monday's removal of a 65 ft. steeple from Holy Family Church after hurricane-force winds dislodged the anchorage causing the steeple to sway up to 5 ft. during the height of Friday's storm.

Photo by Deni Johnson

HOLY FAMILY From Page 1

be expedited on site, according to deCastro.

"It's a mystery," he said, as to why one column lifted from its anchorage on the southwest side of the platform. "We hope to find out soon."

The 2,800 pound bell was offered to the church in 1988 from the Cornerstone Baptist Church in Cambridge following a fire. Most of the experts who assessed the damage believe it saved the steeple from lifting off the roof.

Firefighters received a call Friday afternoon alerting them that the steeple was in danger of falling over in the high winds. An ambulance and fire engine were quickly dispatched and firefighters immediately set up a fire line and used police line tape to isolate the church. A police detail was dispatched to keep people away from the church area.

At around 1 pm Holy Family custodian Richard Campbell reportedly heard cracking and banging above the sanctuary, went outside and saw the steeple teetering and then really rocking.

Fire Chief Ken Erickson described the steeple as really moving, causing some anxious moments. Some feared the steeple would topple causing the heavy bell to crash through the skylight and into the sanctuary.

Msgr. William Glynn, who just recently hosted the 50th anniversary celebration of Holy Family Church with Bernard Cardinal Law and hundreds of visitors from outside the parish, said the steeple scare was quite a harrowing experience. "Thank God no one was injured."

He said he expected insurance would cover most of the damage and thanked all the people who offered assistance (See Sounding Off), including parishioner Terrence O'Duggan of Bay Rd., owner of Mark Equipment Co. of Boston, who made sure a crane was on site immediately to handle the heavy work.

All Masses and parish activities were cancelled over the weekend for the 2,000 parish families Holy Family serves. Msgr. Glynn announced a special dispensation, however many parishioners still attended Mass in neighboring towns.

Many spectators watched the intricate operation which led to dismantling the entire steeple and platform holding the bell.

Engineers from Campbell Steeple Co. in Kentucky flew in Monday to help remove the steeple they had placed on the building 8 years ago after electrician Bill Gurry detached the electronic connection to the bell.

Contractor William Duffy of Marlboro was also on hand to help. He, also was involved with the project when

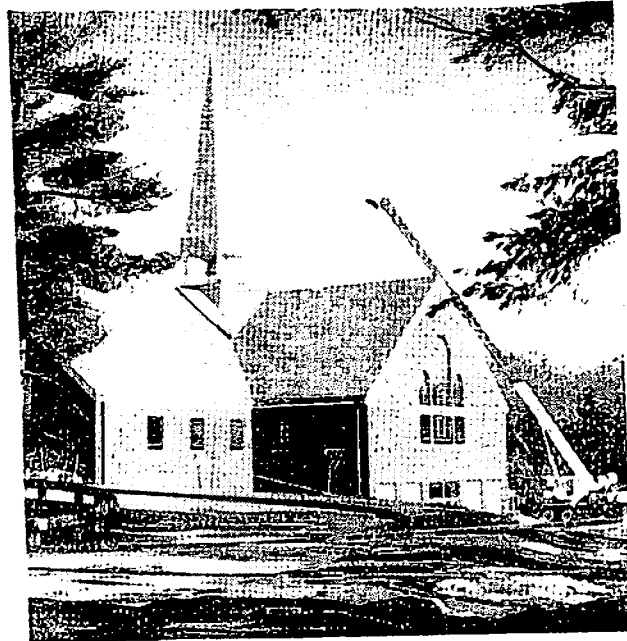
Duxbury Clipper, Wednesday, January 24, 1996
the church was built.

"When you do a church it's like a child. You stay with it forever," said deCastro, who several years ago focused his architectural business at deCastro-Nelson in Boston on mainly religious architecture.

While there were no signs of water damage with the movement of the steeple, Msgr. Glynn recalled that on Christmas eve a year ago, some water did come in through the steeple area and said in retrospect, that may have been the first signal that something was wrong.

The church, which was built on a 12.5 acre site on the corner of Tremont and Chestnut streets replaced a smaller church on Cedar and St. George streets which was sold to become the Ellison Center for the Arts.

Duxbury Clipper, Wednesday, January 24, 1996



Holy Family Saves Its Steeple

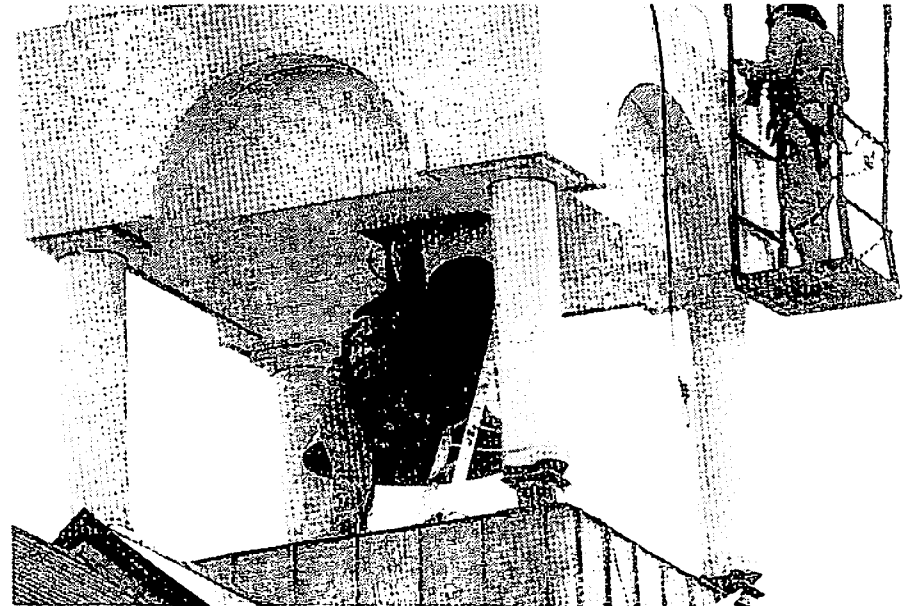
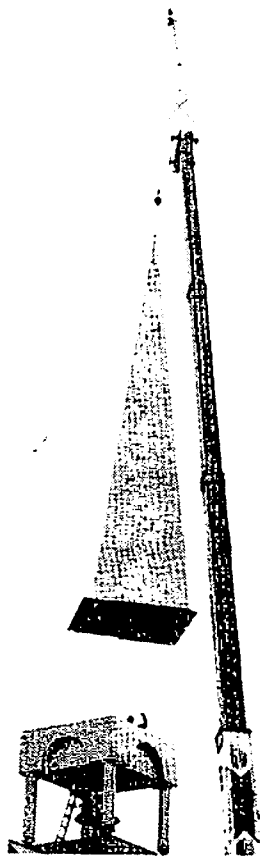


Photo by [unclear] [unclear] disconnects the 2,800-pound bell



The crane lifts the 65' steeple from the platform holding the 2,800 pound bell.



(L-r) Robin Nudd and son Evan, CCD teacher Tricia Fahey and Holy Family secretary Mary Rogers view the excitement from the road.



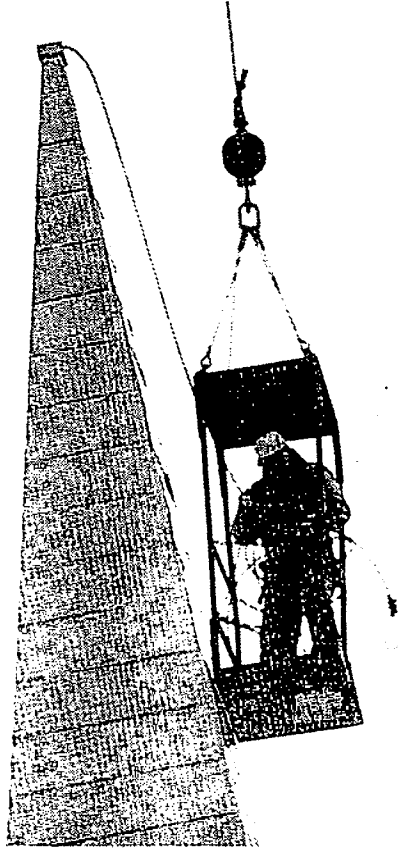
(L-r) James Walsh, the chancery engineer, and architect Anthony deCastro shared some anxious moments.



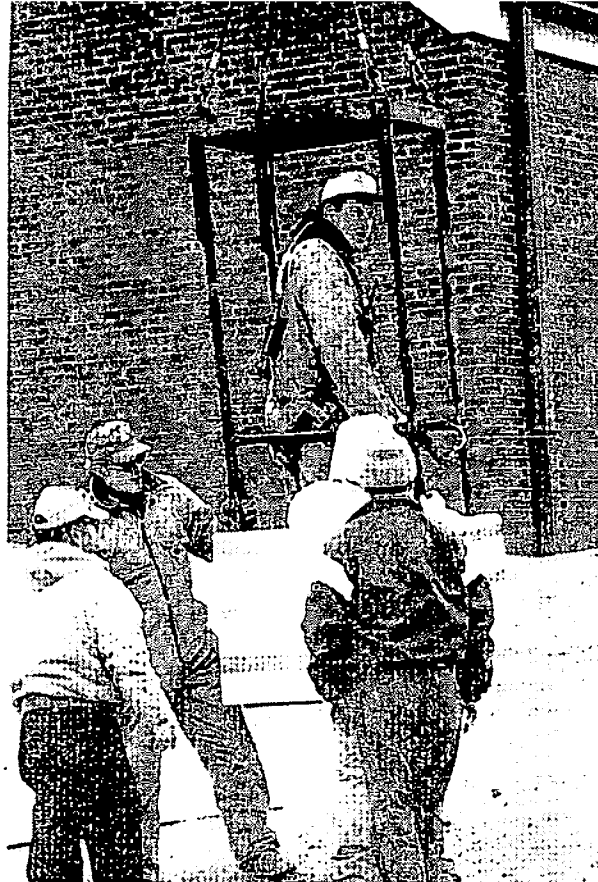
(L-r) Former Fire Chief Howard Blanchard, Msgr. Glynn, Terry O'Duggan of of Mark Equipment, and Building Inspector Kevin McDonald.



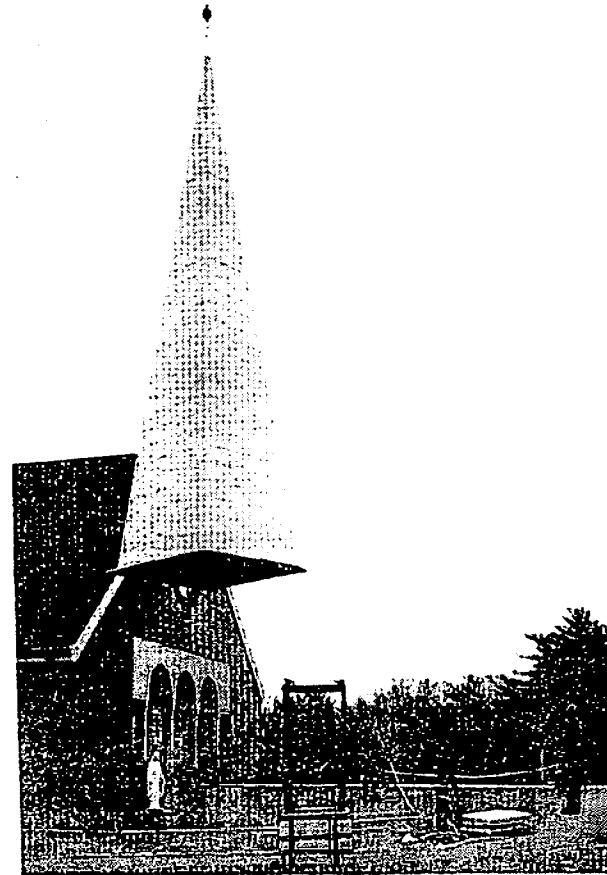
Msgr. William Glynn, Rev. Richard Murray from St. Dennis Parish in Westwood, and Mary DiCenzo, parish secretary.



Engineers from Kentucky Steeple Co. flew in to help disassemble.



An engineer from Kentucky Steeple prepares to remove the steeple from its platform.



Coming down for a landing after liftoff.